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Chaoism & Chaos Magic

A Personal View

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As there are as many Chaos Magicians as there are Chaoists practicing magic, I cannot speak for the subject in general but only for my own Chaoism and Chaos Magic.

However, if you want a one-line definition with which most Chaoists would probably not disagree, then I offer the following. Chaoists usually accept the meta-belief that belief is a tool for achieving effects; it is not an end in itself.

It is easy to see how other people and cultures are the victims of their own beliefs. The horrors of Islam and the ghastly state of politics in sub-Saharan Africa, are obvious examples, but we rarely pause to consider the extent to which we are the victims of our own beliefs, and the ability we have to modify them if we wish.

It is perhaps worth considering the recent history of belief in Western cultures before mounting an attack on the very foundations of the contemporary world view. For about a millennia and a half the existence of "God" was an incontrovertible fact of life in Christendom. It was never questioned or thought to be questionable. Hideous wars and persecutions were conducted to support one interpretation of deity against another. Learned men wrote thousands of books of theology debating points which seem utterly tedious and idiotic to us now, but the central question of the existence of "God" was never considered. Yet now, the belief in "God" as the author of most of what goes on in the world has been almost completely abandoned, and belief in even the existence of an absentee "God" is in most places fading. Satanism as an anti-religious gesture is now a waste of iconoclastic talent. The alchemists, sorcerers and scientists of the late Middle Ages and the Renaissance won a stupendous posthumous victory. Their questioning of the medieval world view started a rot that brought the whole edifice down eventually.

We can laugh looking back on it now, but I assert that we now live under a collective obsession which is even more powerful and will appear equally limiting and ridiculous to future historians.

Since the eighteenth century European enlightenment, a belief has grown to the point where it is now so all-pervasive, and so fundamental a part of the Western world view, that one is generally considered mad if one questions it. This is a belief that has proved so powerful and useful that virtually everyone in the Western world accept it without question. Even those who try to maintain a belief in "God" tend to place more actual faith in this

new belief for most practical purposes. I am about to reveal what this fundamental contemporary belief is. Most of you will think it is so obvious a fact that it can, hardly be called a belief. That, however, is a measure of its extraordinary power over us. Most of you will think me a madman or a fool to even question it. Few of you will be able to imagine what it would be like not to believe it, or that it would be possible to replace it with something else. Here it is: the dominant belief in all Western Cultures is that this universe runs on material causality and is thus comprehensible to reason. Virtually everyone also maintains a secondary belief that contradicts this - the belief that they have something called free will, although they are unable to specify what this is - but I will deal with that later.

We spend billions every year indoctrinating our young with the primary belief in material causality in our schools. Our language, our logic, and most of our machines, are built largely upon this belief. We regard it as more reliable than "God".

Now, it has been one of the functions of the Magician to try and break through to something beyond the normal. My own magical quest has always had a strongly antinomian and iconoclastic element, and I long ago decided to go for broke and attack the primary beliefs of our culture. Religion is too easy a target as it is already fatally disabled by our ancestors, the Renaissance sorcerers and scientists. Contemporary Satanists are wasting their efforts. Ideology is thankfully being gradually replaced with economics. The main thrust of my Chaoism is against the doctrine of material causality and secondarily against most of the nonsense that passes for modern psychology.

Anyway, now I have to firstly try and convince you that there is something seriously wrong with material causality, and that there is something that could supersede it as a belief. These are vitally important questions for magicians, for since the demise of essentially spiritual descriptions of magic, the belief in material causality has been increasingly used in a haphazard fashion to form various ill-conceived metaphors such as "magical energy" or "magical force" which are tacitly presumed to be something analogous to static electricity or radio waves. This is, I think, complete bullshit. Magic can sometimes be induced to behave a bit like this, but it is not a very effective description.

Before attempting a frontal assault on material causality I shall backtrack a little to gather ammunition. Few people noticed that in the 1930`s a serious crack was discovered in the fabric of material causality which, on the grounds of faith alone, was supposed to cover everything. This crack was called Quantum Physics, and it was pre-eminently Niels Bohr who, with his Copenhagen Interpretation, poked a finger into the crack and pried open a wrap to reveal a different reality.

Basically Bohr showed that this reality is better modeled by a description of non-material causality operating probabilistically not deterministically. This may sound tame at first, but the implications for our everyday view of the world and for our theories of magic are awesome. It brought to an end the era of the clockwork universe paradigm which began over two hundred years ago and which almost everyone still believes in their guts, even if they cannot formulate it precisely. I urge magicians everywhere to give thanks by drinking what is probably the best lager in the world, for it was the Carlsberg Brewery in Copenhagen that supported Bohr and his colleagues while they did the physics.

The majority of straight scientists find quantum physics as distasteful as a priest would find witch-craft. If they have to use it they prefer not to think about the implications. Even Einstein, who started quantum physics going but made his major contribution in Relativity, felt repelled by its implications, on ground of scientific faith and residual Judaic belief, and wasted much of his later life campaigning fruitlessly against it.

Quantum physics says to me that not only is magic possible in a world that is infinitely Chaotic than we thought, but that magic is central to the functioning of this universe. This is a magical universe not a clockwork one. Causal materialist beliefs were a liberating and refreshing breath of fresh air after a millennia and a half of monotheism, but now, at their zenith, they have become tyranny. Relativity and the fundamental physics associated with it are probably close to a final refinement of the causal materialist paradigm, and as such they now seem a terrible prison.

For all practical purposes they confine us to this planet forever and rule out magic from our lives. Quantum physics, which I believe currently to be basically an investigation of the magical phenomena underlying the reality most people have perceived as non-magical for the last two hundred years, shows us a way out.

It may be some time before any significant portion of humanity learns to believe the new paradigm in their guts and live accordingly, but eventually they will. Until then it is bound to sound like discombobulating gobbledygook or tarted-up intellectualism to most people.

I would like to mention my other favorite iconoclasm in passing without explanation. I reject the conventional view of post-monotheistic Western psychology that we are individual unitary beings possessing free will. I prefer the description that we are colonial beings composed of multiple personalities; although generally unafflicted with the selective amnesia which is the hallmark of this otherwise omnipresent condition. And that secondly there is no such thing as free will; although we have the capacity to act randomly, or perhaps one should say more precisely stochastically, and the propensity to identify with whatever we find ourselves doing as a result.

All the gods and goddesses are within us and non-materially about us as well, in the form of non-local information.

I consider that all events occur basically by magic; the apparent causality investigated by classical science is merely the more statistically reliable end of a spectrum whose other end is complete Chaos. However, I would like to end with a few words about how my Chaoism affects my personal activity in what is ordinarily called magic.

There are for me two main aspects of magic; the parapsychological and the psychological. In enchantment and divination I believe that the magician is attempting to interact with nature via non-material causality. He is basically exchanging information with his environment without using his physical faculties. Austin Osman Spare precisely identified the mental maneuvers necessary to allow this to occur. The maneuvers are startlingly simple and once you have understood them you can invent an unlimited number of spells and forms of divination. The maneuvers are sacred but the forms of their expression are arbitrary; you can use anything at random. Bohr and Spare are for me Saints of the Church of Chaos.

I consider that when a magician interacts with those apparently sentient sources of knowledge, inspiration and parapsychological ability that used to be called spirits, gods, demons and elementals, he is tapping into the extraordinary resources that each of us already contains. When activated they may also receive some input via non-material causality from outside. Yet since we all contain such a rich multitude within our own unconscious or subconscious and can also receive congruent information from the collective unconsciousness as it were, then the possibilities are practically limitless. Given the correct technique one can invoke or evoke anything, even things which did not exist before one thought of calling them. This may sound like complete Chaos, and I have to report that my own researches confirm that it is !

Chaos Magic for me means a handful of basic techniques which must be adhered to strictly to get results, but beyond that it offers a freedom of expression and intent undreamed of in all previous forms of magic.

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